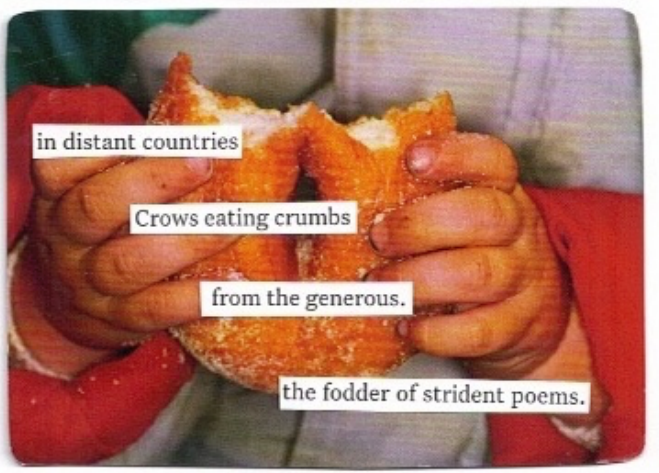
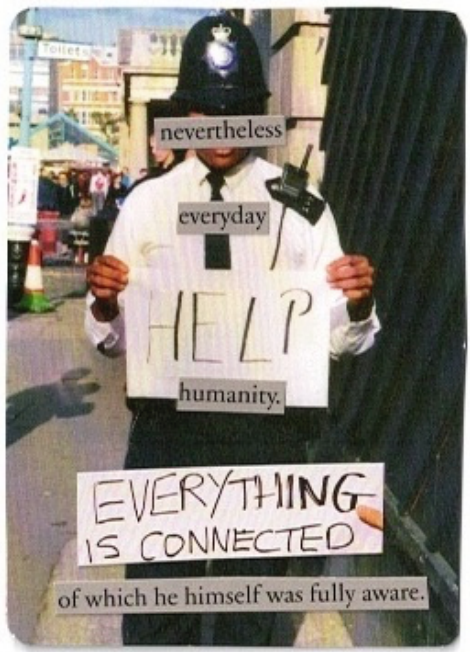
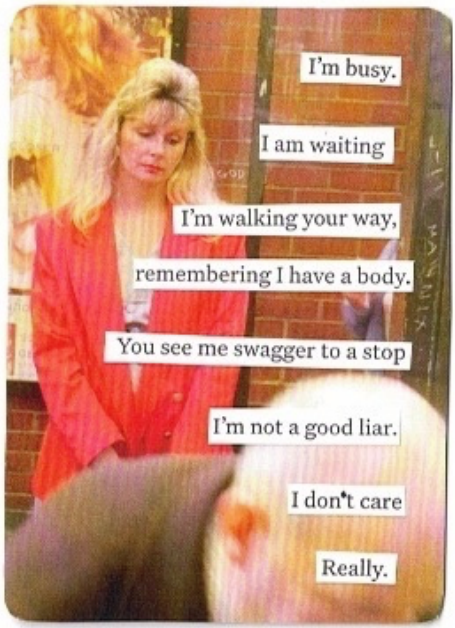
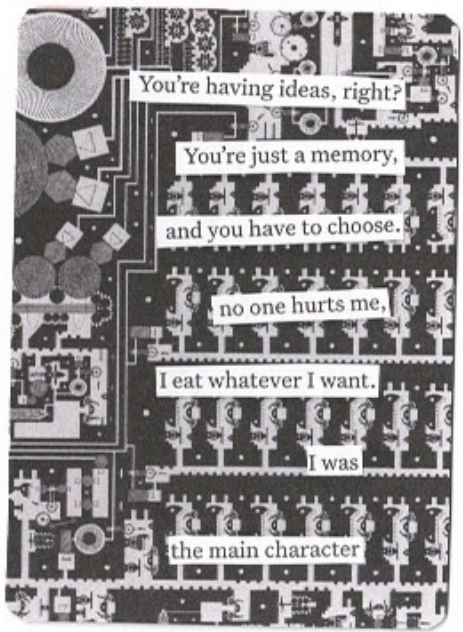
strident poems & bedlam

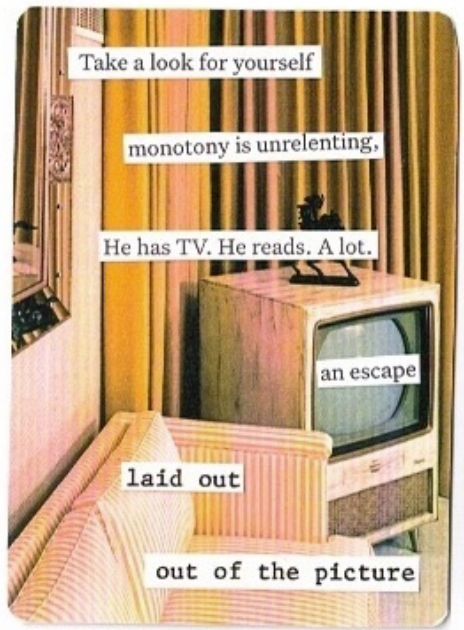
murphyao ink
june 2026

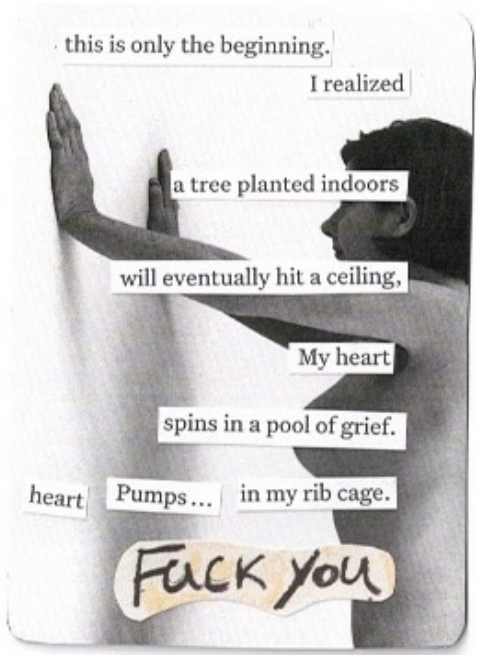

in distant countries
Crows eating crumbs
from the generous.
the fodder of strident poems.


nevertheless
everyday
HELP
humanity.
EVERYTHING
IS CONNECTED
of which he himself was fully aware.

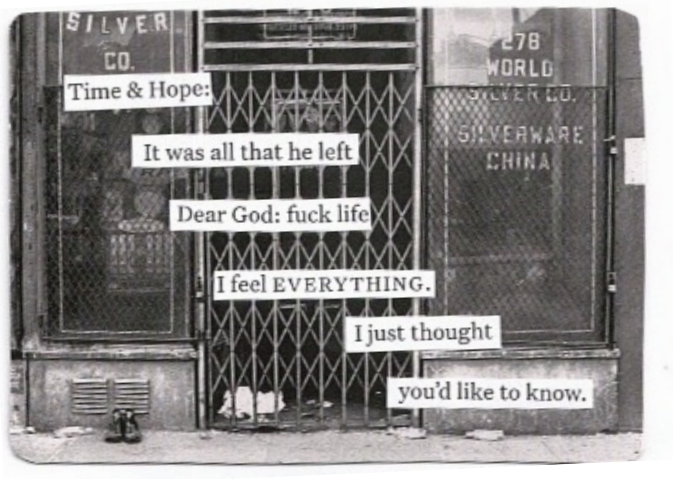

I'm busy.
I am waiting
I'm walking your way,
remembering I have a body.
You see me swagger to a stop
I'm not a good liar.
I don't care
Really.

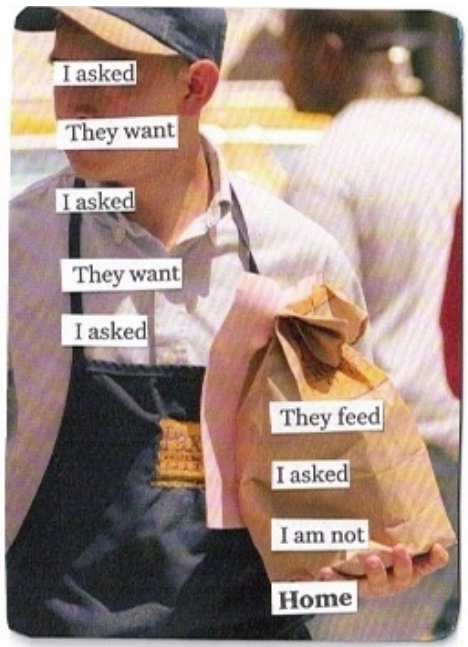

You're having ideas, right?
You're just a memory,
and you have to choose.
no one hurts me,
I eat whatever I want.
I was
the main character

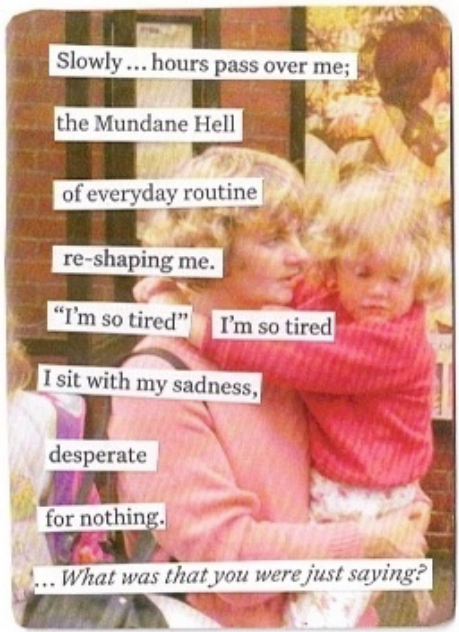

Take a look for yourself
monotony is unrelenting,
He has TV. He reads. A lot.
an escape
laid out
out of the picture

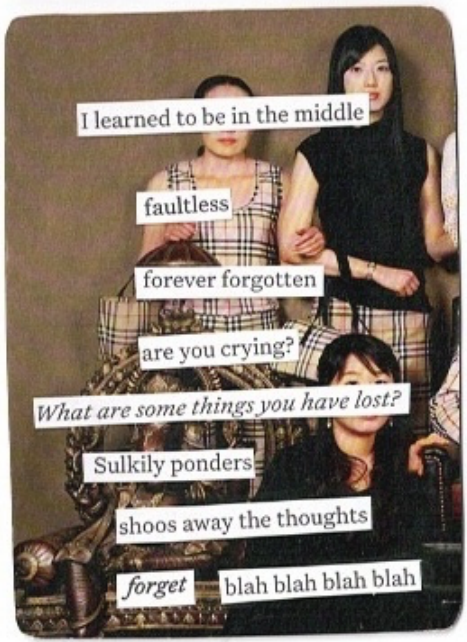

this is only the beginning.
I realized
a tree planted indoors
will eventually hit a ceiling,
My heart
spins in a pool of grief.
heart
Pumps...
in my rib cage.
FUCK YOU

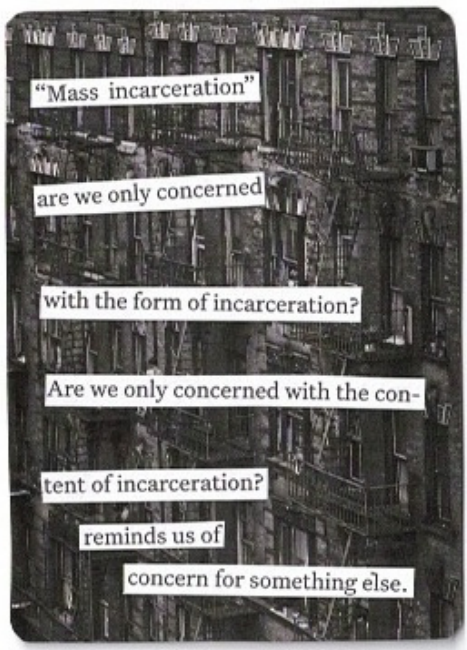
I still look away
And so still I sit ...
A stranger sits
we missed some things,
promises
weren't
kept
It's not important

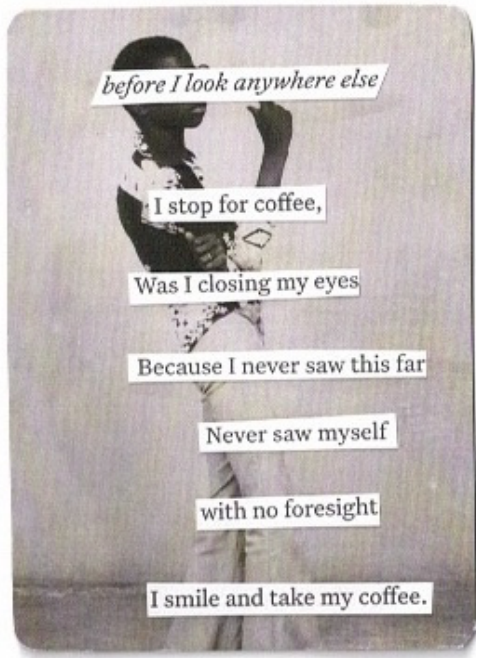

SILVER
CO.
278
WORLD
SILVERWARE
CHINA
Time & Hope:
It was all that he left
Dear God: fuck life
I feel EVERYTHING.
I just thought
you'd like to know.

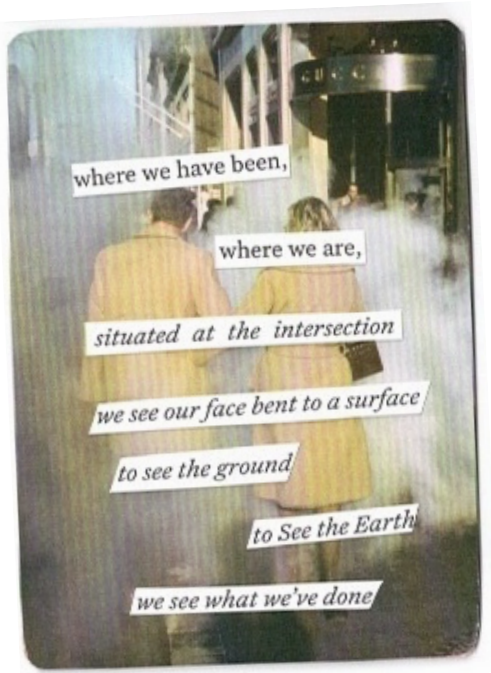

I asked
They want
I asked
They want
I asked
They feed
I asked
I am not
Home

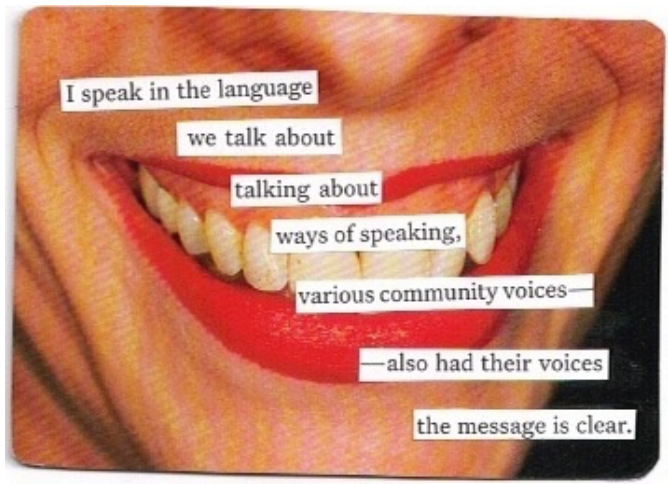

Slowly ... hours pass over me;
the Mundane Hell
of everyday routine
re-shaping me.
"I'm so tired"
I'm so tired
I sit with my sadness,
desperate
for nothing.
... What was that you were just saying?

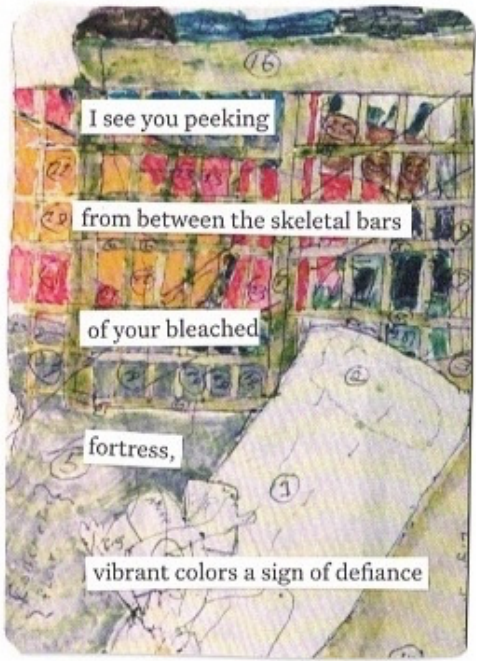

I learned to be in the middle
faultless
forever forgotten
are you crying?
What are some things you have lost?
Sulkily ponders
shoos away the thoughts
forget
blah blah blah blah

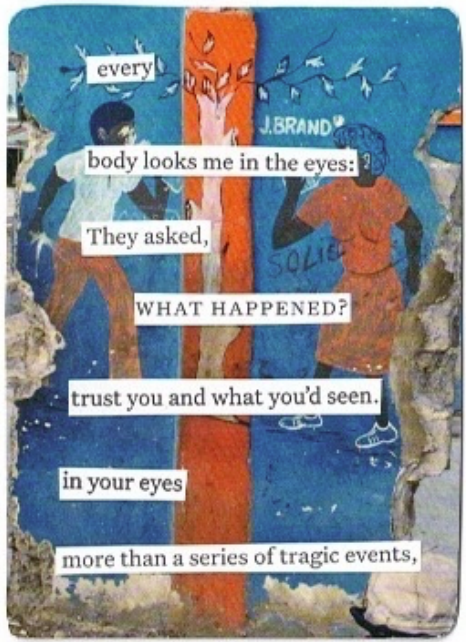

"Mass incarceration"
are we only concerned
with the form of incarceration?
Are we only concerned with the con-
tent of incarceration?
reminds us of
concern for something else.

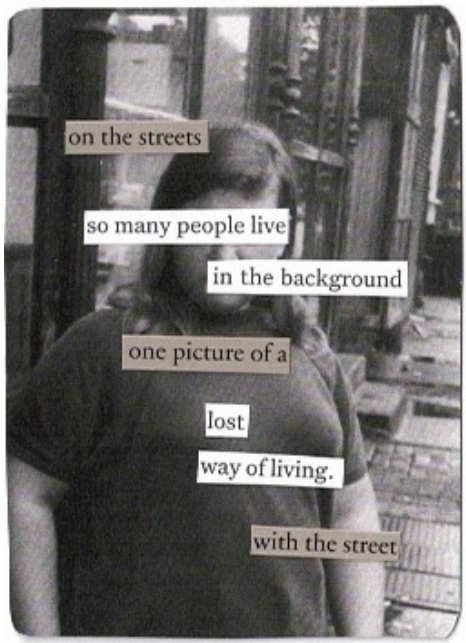

before I look anywhere else
I stop for coffee,
Was I closing my eyes
Because I never saw this far
Never saw myself
with no foresight
I smile and take my coffee.

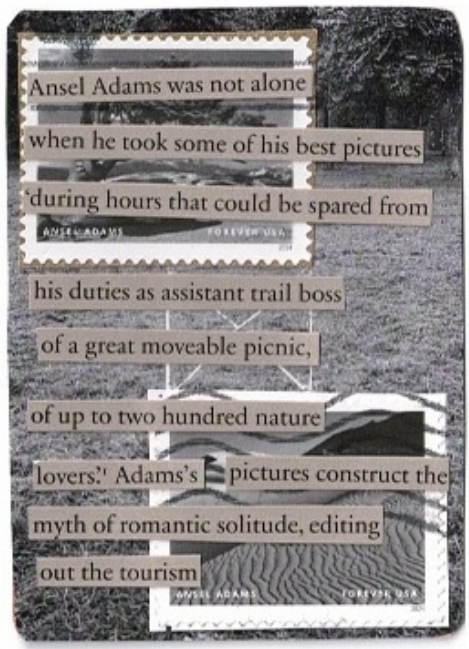

where we have been,
where we are,
situated at the intersection
we see our face bent to a surface
to see the ground
to See the Earth
we see what we've done

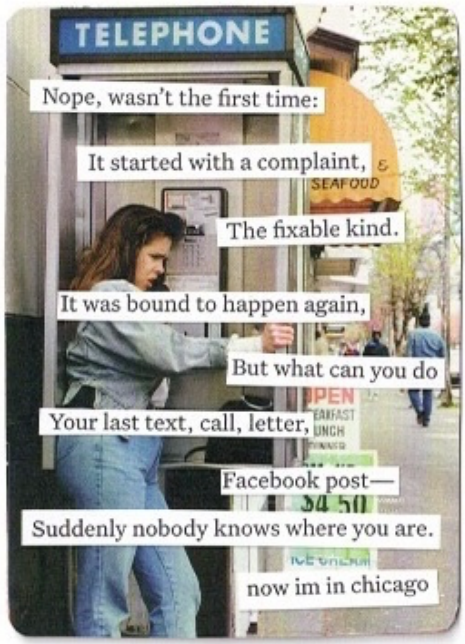

I speak in the language
we talk about
talking about
ways of speaking,
various community voices—
—also had their voices
the message is clear.

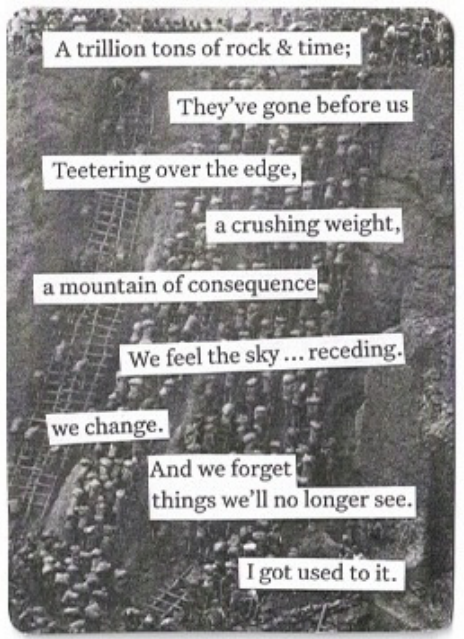

I see you peeking
from between the skeletal bars
of your bleached
fortress,
vibrant colors a sign of defiance

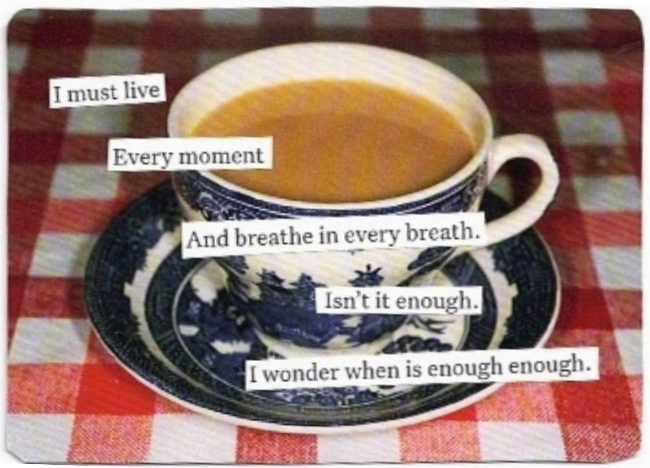

every
J.BRAND
body looks me in the eyes:
They asked,
WHAT HAPPENED?
trust you and what you'd seen.
in your eyes
more than a series of tragic events,

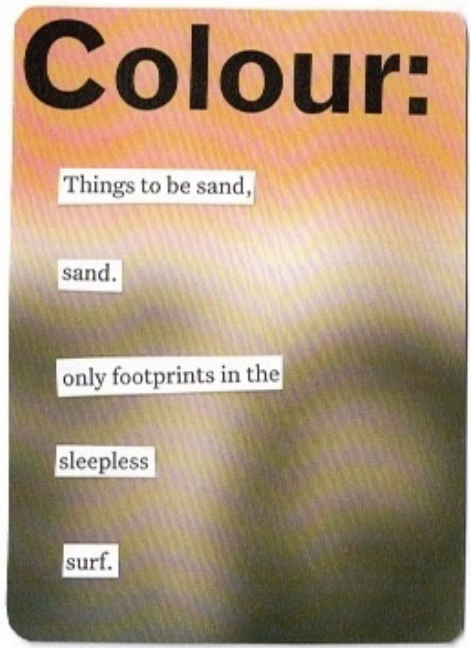

on the streets
so many people live
in the background
one picture of a
lost
way of living.
with the street


Ansel Adams was not alone
when he took some of his best pictures
'during hours that could be spared from
his duties as assistant trail boss
of a great moveable picnic,
of up to two hundred nature
lovers.' Adams's pictures construct the
myth of romantic solitude, editing
out the tourism
ANSEL ADAMS
FOREVER USA


TELEPHONE
Nope, wasn't the first time:
It started with a complaint,
SEAFOOD
The fixable kind.
It was bound to happen again,
But what can you do
Your last text, call, letter,
Facebook post—
Suddenly nobody knows where you are.
now im in chicago

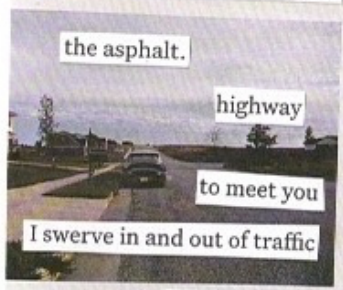

A trillion tons of rock & time;
They've gone before us
Teetering over the edge,
a crushing weight,
a mountain of consequence
We feel the sky ... receding.
we change.
And we forget
things we'll no longer see.
I got used to it.


I must live
Every moment
And breathe in every breath.
Isn't it enough.
I wonder when is enough enough.


Colour:
Things to be sand,
sand.
only footprints in the
sleepless
surf.

The Road to Meet You:

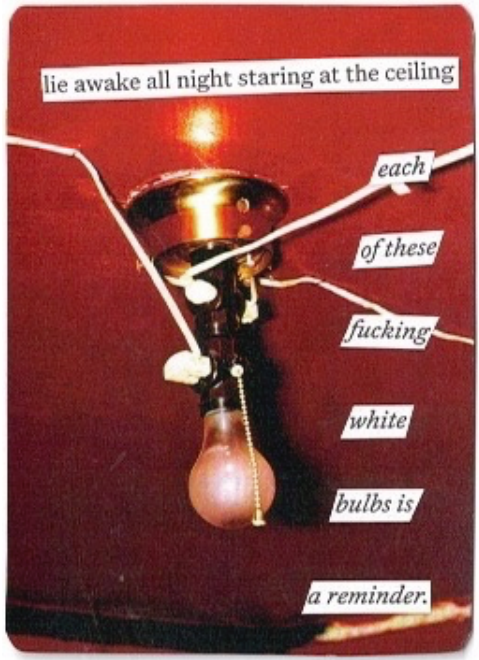
dark cloud in the skies above

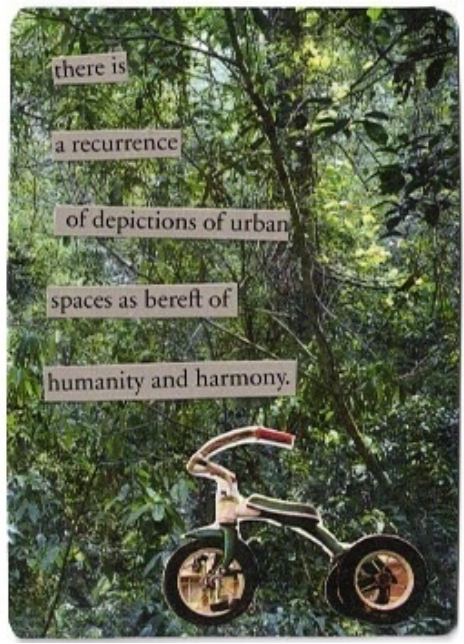


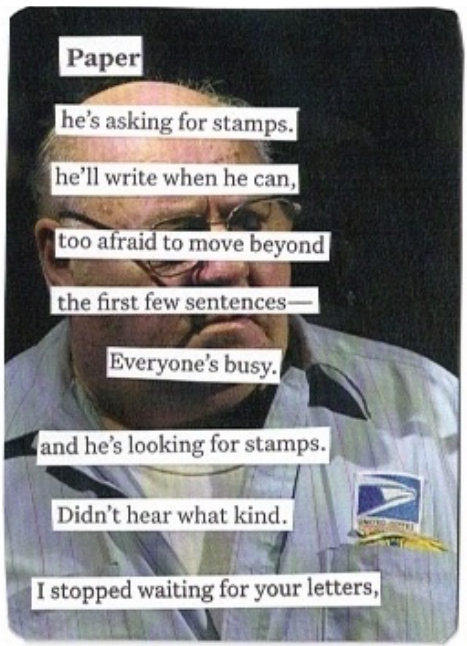
everything goes up

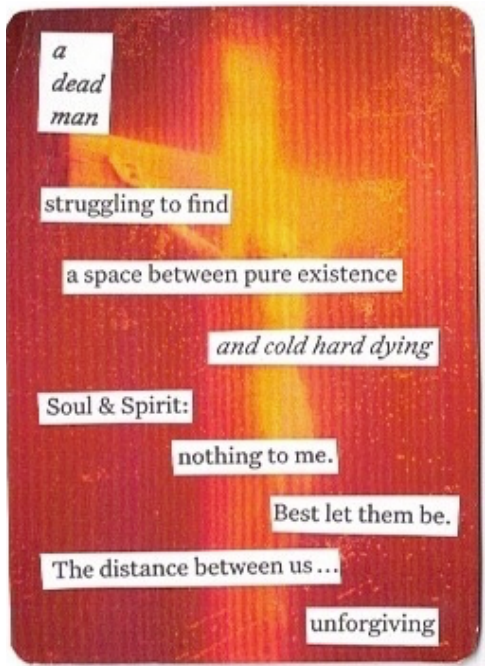
the same way.

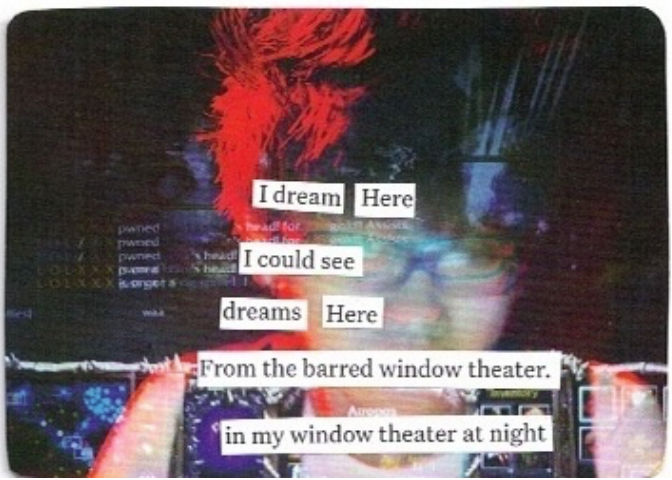
I know you'd ask, "*Why?*"

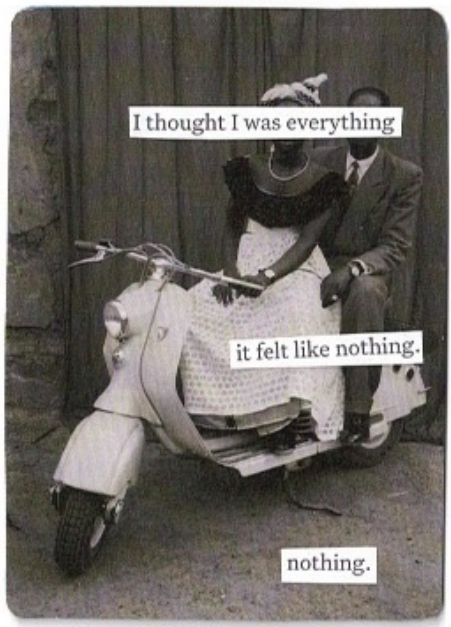

lie awake all night staring at the ceiling
each
of these
fucking
white
bulbs is
a reminder.

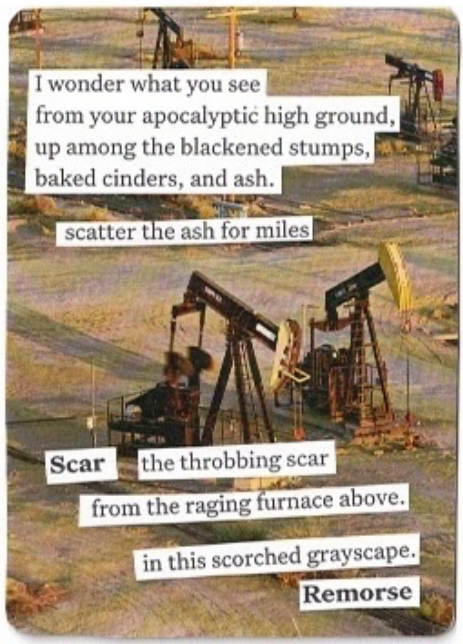

there is
a recurrence
of depictions of urban
spaces as bereft of
humanity and harmony.


Paper
he's asking for stamps.
he'll write when he can,
too afraid to move beyond
the first few sentences—
Everyone's busy.
and he's looking for stamps.
Didn't hear what kind.
I stopped waiting for your letters,


a
dead
man
struggling to find
a space between pure existence
and cold hard dying
Soul & Spirit:
nothing to me.
Best let them be.
The distance between us…
unforgiving


I dream Here
I could see
dreams Here
From the barred window theater.
in my window theater at night


I thought I was everything
it felt like nothing.
nothing.

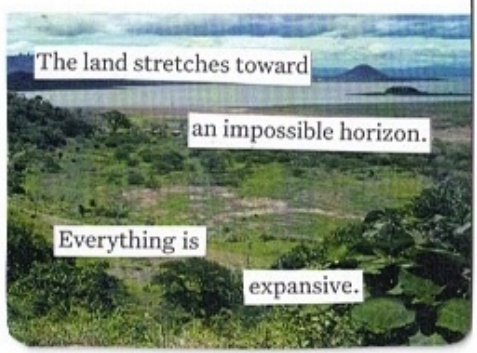

I wonder what you see
from your apocalyptic high ground,
up among the blackened stumps,
baked cinders, and ash.
scatter the ash for miles
Scar
the throbbing scar
from the raging furnace above.
in this scorched grayscape.
Remorse

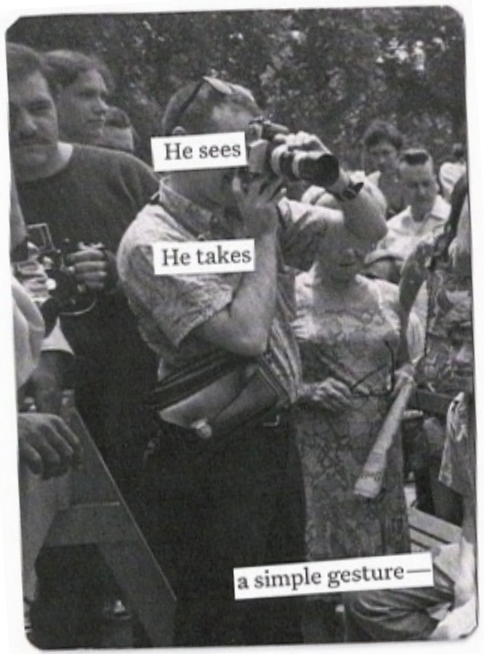
The sky has no

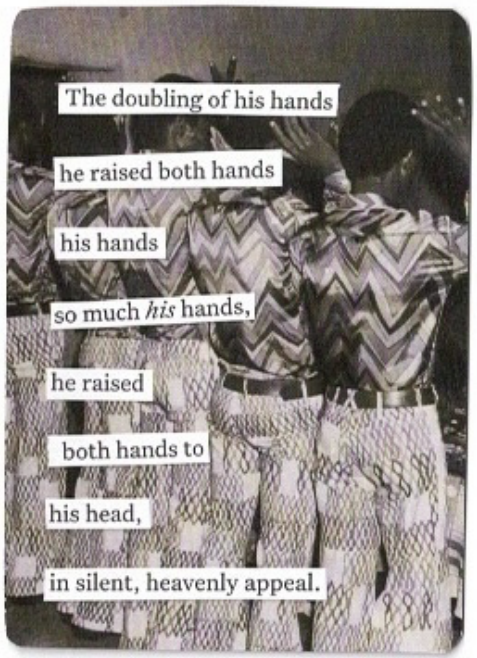
edges and no ending.

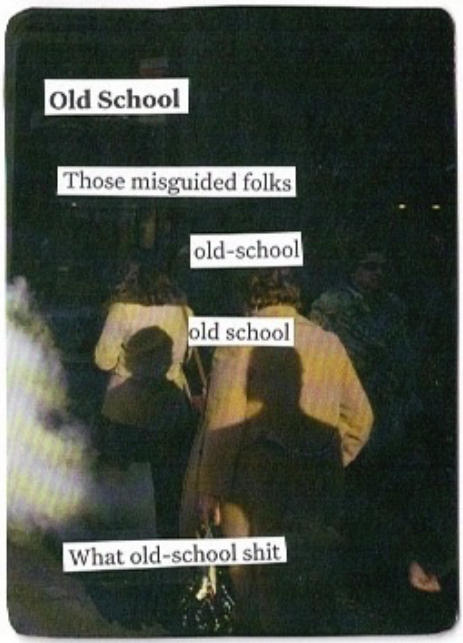
the sun reaches for

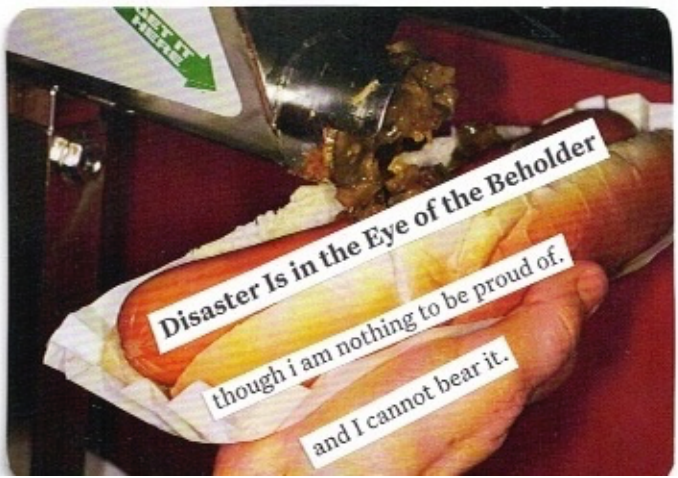
a higher point in the sky.

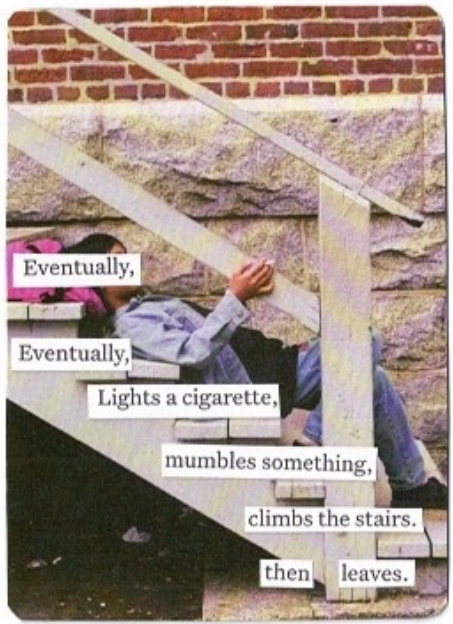


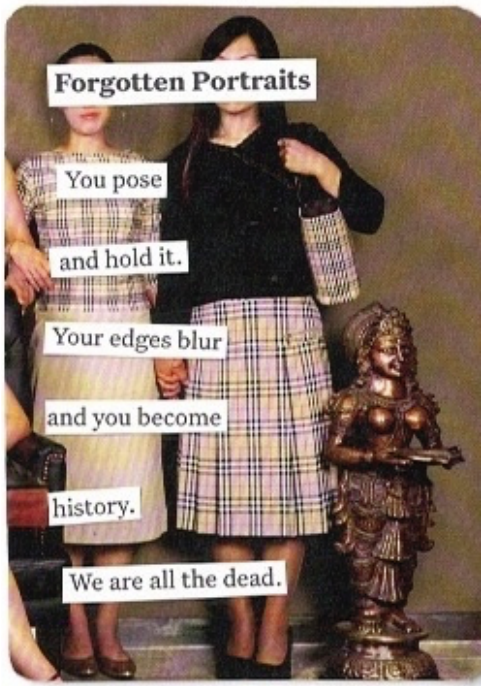

He sees
He takes
a simple gesture—

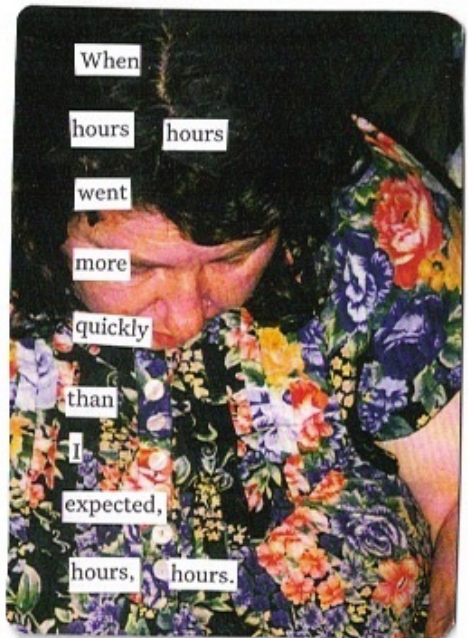

The doubling of his hands
he raised both hands
his hands
so much *his* hands,
he raised
both hands to
his head,
in silent, heavenly appeal.

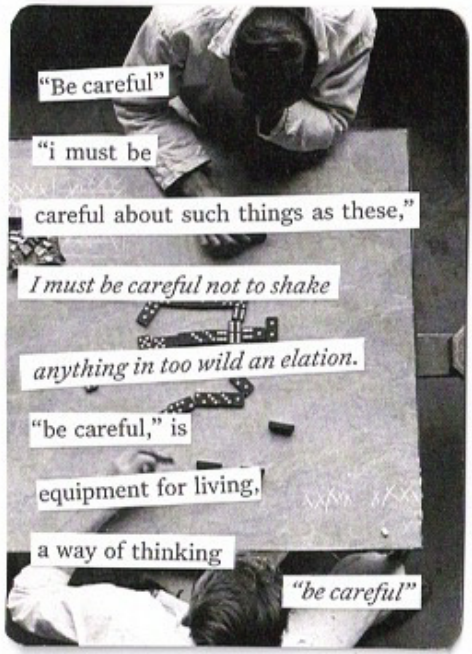

Old School
Those misguided folks
old-school
old school
What old-school shit

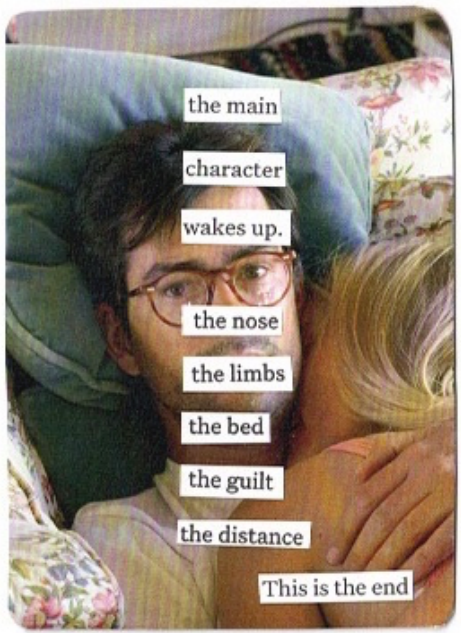

Disaster Is in the Eye of the Beholder
though i am nothing to be proud of,
and I cannot bear it.

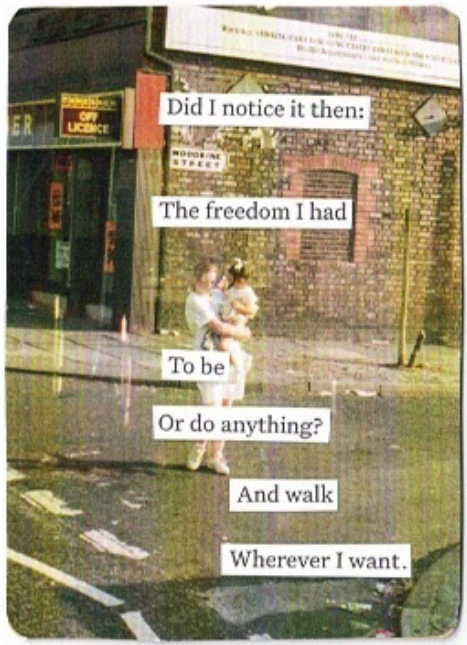

Eventually,
Eventually,
Lights a cigarette,
mumbles something,
climbs the stairs.
then
leaves.

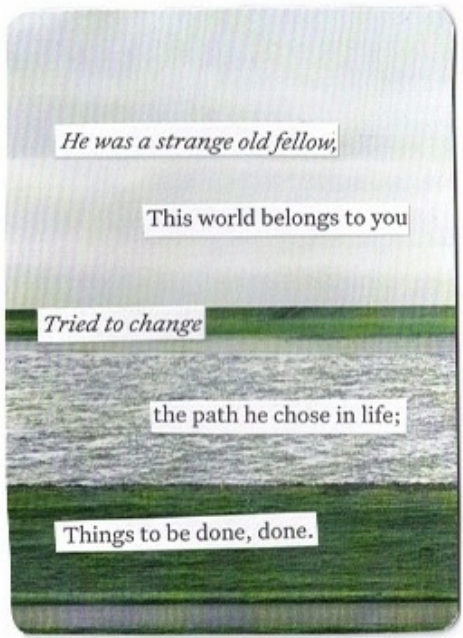

Forgotten Portraits
You pose
and hold it.
Your edges blur
and you become
history.
We are all the dead.

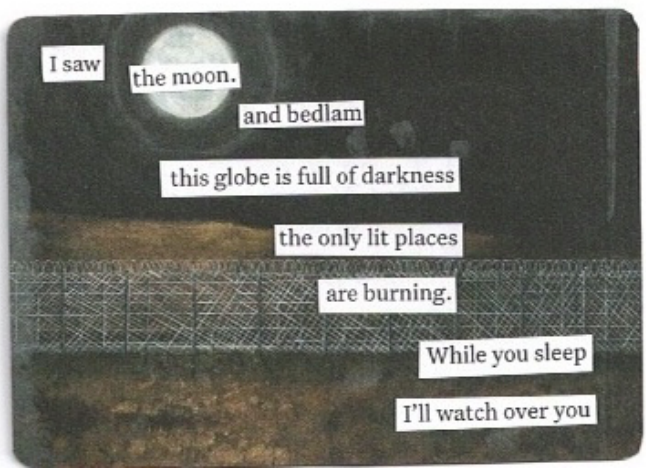

When
hours hours
went
more
quickly
than
I
expected,
hours, hours.

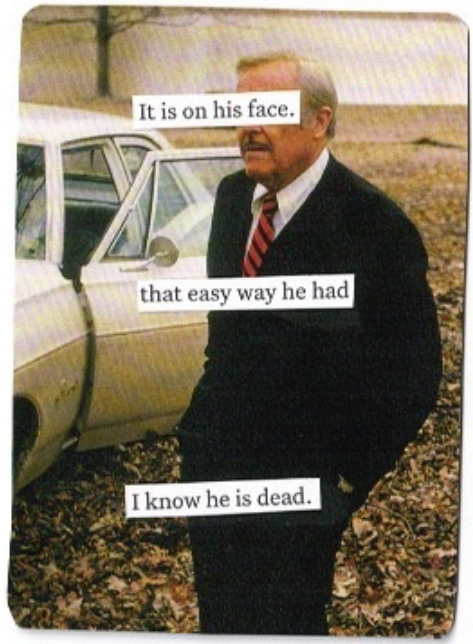

"Be careful"
"i must be
careful about such things as these,"
I must be careful not to shake
anything in too wild an elation.
"be careful," is
equipment for living,
a way of thinking
"be careful"


the main
character
wakes up.
the nose
the limbs
the bed
the guilt
the distance
This is the end


OFF LICENCE
Did I notice it then:
The freedom I had
To be
Or do anything?
And walk
Wherever I want.


He was a strange old fellow,
This world belongs to you
Tried to change
the path he chose in life;
Things to be done, done.


I saw
the moon.
and bedlam
this globe is full of darkness
the only lit places
are burning.
While you sleep
I'll watch over you



collages made at Camp Reneker,
Twin Lake, Michigan
from the February 2021 issue of *Poetry*
& one of my sister's photography textbooks
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